

Congressman Jim Kolbe

8th District Arizona

Newsletter

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HONORING OUR HEROES

Memorial Day means a lot of things to different people. For many, it means a three day weekend at the start of summer or a reason to invite friends to a barbeque. We must remember the true meaning of Memorial Day. The holiday is observed in memory of our nation's armed service personnel killed in wartime. As one of the dwindling number of U.S. Representatives who has served in combat, I am keenly aware of the importance of Memorial Day. Every year, we remember the names of those who have died in our nation's service. This year, there are new names to remember, of lives ended too soon, lost in a new war to protect us from terrorists.

Elmer Davis, a radio announcer and news commentator once said, "This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave." I had the privilege of visiting troops in Iraq last Christmas. I experienced firsthand the meaning of the word "brave" as I met with young men and women committed to seeing their mission to the end.

While we are all anxious to have our sons, daughters, husbands, wives, and friends back home, we must not give up our fight. We must not look back twenty years from

now and confront the knowledge, that when faced with the opportunities of a Taliban-free Afghan government, a democracy in Ukraine, a Middle East craving freedom and representative governments, we hesitated and left the democratic forces we had unleashed adrift, with only meager means and no U.S. influence.

Congress is working to ensure our nation's security by completing the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill. Besides continuing funding for the War on Terror and increasing the number of Border Patrol agents and equipment along the border, the bill also provides much needed humanitarian assistance to tsunami affected regions. It is a concrete means to communicate to the world that we are serious about spreading liberty and democracy.

While troops are fighting thousands of miles away, we must not ignore the importance of protection on our own soil. I



Jim discusses Congressional Appointments with the Honor Guard from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base at Academy Day 2005.

am a member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, which provides me with direct oversight in ensuring

adequate resources to keep both our northern and southern borders secure. I successfully added an amendment to the REAL ID Act that identifies and addresses gaps in border security. It will increase national security by implementing new technologies, increasing communications among federal, state and tribal agencies, and encouraging coordination among law enforcement.

On this Memorial Day, a grateful nation honors the memory of all the young men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice. I encourage you to use the three day weekend to enjoy a barbeque with family or watch a neighborhood parade, but while you do this, say a prayer for the soldiers who have fought, are fighting, and will fight for our freedom. God bless America.

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CASEWORK CORNER

◆ IMMIGRATION CASE

The Problem: A spouse of a U.S. Citizen had to remain overseas for months with the couple's U.S. born infant awaiting a visa. The infant became ill and was hospitalized.

Kolbe Office Solution: Helped obtain a visa and both returned to the U.S.

◆ VETERAN'S AFFAIRS CASE

The Problem: A veteran went several months without pay and was unable to resolve the situation on his own.

Kolbe Office Solution: Contacted Veteran's Affairs. Was able to get the veteran back in regular pay status and get all missed pay reimbursed.

*Dale Wolfe, a
Valley Union
High School
sophomore, is the
District 8
Congressional
Art Competition
Grand Prize
Winner with his
artwork
"Caballo
Horse."*



◆ PASSPORT CASE

The Problem: A U.S. citizen born overseas to a military family needed proof of citizenship to obtain a passport for business travel.

Kolbe Office Solution: Helped obtain a copy of "Report of Birth Abroad" from the Dept. of State and helped obtain the passport.

◆ IRS CASE

The Problem: An organization needed help setting up 501(c)(3) status in order to continue care for 900 clients.

Kolbe Office Solution: Assisted the non-profit organization in completing paperwork and getting the 501(c)(3) status complete. Service to the 900 clients was not disrupted.

My office can help resolve problems you may encounter with federal agencies. We can inquire as to the status of your case and seek a resolution to your problem. Areas we assist include: Cold War Certificate, Military & Veterans' Affairs, Social Security & Medicare, Medicaid, Passports & Immigration, Small Business Concerns, IRS, Housing, Student Loan Repayments, & Federal Retirement Benefits.

Ways Your Congressional Office Can Help You

◆ CONGRESSIONAL TOURS

My staff is happy to assist in getting your family tickets to tour historic sites in DC, including the White House. Other sites include: House and Senate Gallery passes, the Capitol, Department of State, the Kennedy Center, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, and Mount Vernon. Contact my office and ask for a Congressional Tours Request Form. Tours fill up on a first come, first serve basis, so please make requests as early as possible.

◆ FLAG REQUESTS

Cotton or nylon flags are available in several sizes. You can choose a specific date you would like the flag to be flown over the Capitol. Certificates accompanying the flag verify the date flown, occasion, and person presenting the flag. Contact my office for a Flag Request Form.



For more information or to download application forms, visit <http://www.house.gov/kolbe/services.htm>

◆ GRANT INFORMATION

Most organizations are not aware of the many federal grants available. Current information regarding federal grant and loan opportunities is obtainable through our Tucson office. If your group or organization presently applies for, or expects to apply for, a federal grant or loan, we can assist by providing information on availability, providing letters of support when appropriate, and monitoring the application's status.

◆ ACADEMY NOMINATIONS

Those interested in attending one of the service academies (Air Force, Navy, or Army) should contact my office and fill out the Academy Nomination Application by the spring of their high school junior year. Applicants should also contact the respective service academies directly to open files.

KOLBE HOLDS TOWN HALLS

Each spring, I have the privilege of meeting with hundreds of residents at town hall style meetings. This year, more



Kolbe answers questions at a town hall meeting in Marana.

than 8 meetings were held in Tucson, Marana, Green Valley, Sierra Vista, Corona de Tucson, and Patagonia. It is clear that Social Security reform, border security, and base closures are of significant importance to the communities. I have introduced bipartisan Social Security reform legislation that allows younger workers the chance to earn a nest egg for their future while ensuring the system is there for our grandchildren.

I will continue to secure our border. I am pleased to now be serving on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, where I have direct oversight into stopping the flow of illegal immigrants. I have also introduced comprehensive border security and immigration reform legislation.

It is an honor to have two military bases in southeastern Arizona. Neither of these installations is in excess and was not on the Department of Defense removal list. I will continue to fight for Davis-Monthan and Ft. Huachuca, as well as the other military installations in Arizona to make sure the BRAC Commission is aware of each of their merits.

For those of you who attended the town halls, thank you for your insightful comments. Your participation helps me to effectively do the job of representing you in Congress. For those of you who couldn't make it, I hope to see you at future meetings.

SECURING OUR BORDERS

It is necessary for our nation to secure both its northern and southern borders. I have been named to the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee which allows me direct oversight into stopping the flow of illegal immigration. By serving on this subcommittee, I can ensure Border Patrol has the resources it needs to effectively do its job and keep us safe.

To truly secure our borders the federal government needs to take a two-pronged approach: increase technology and resources along the border and address our broken immigration system. I have introduced and passed legislation to deal with both aspects of this problem.

On February 5, I successfully attached an amendment to the REAL ID Act. The amendment increases national security by implementing new technologies, increasing communications among federal, state and tribal agencies, and improving coordination among law enforcement agencies.

Studies show that 99% of those crossing the border do not come with criminal intent but are merely looking for work. In order to make it possible for our Border Patrol to focus its attention on the other 1%, we must create legal entry channels for workers seeking jobs that no American will do. By creating a temporary worker program, we can do that. Instead of cutting fences, vandalizing property and straining law enforcement and health care capabilities, workers would be channeled through ports of entry where they can be documented, screened and monitored.

On May 12, Senator McCain, Senator Kennedy, Congressman Flake, Congressman Gutierrez and I introduced the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. HR 2330 creates two new visa categories, the H-5A and the H-5B. The H-5A is for foreign workers who wish to work legally within the United States. The H-5B is a vehicle by which the current illegal population, after being penalized for breaking the law with a fine and an extensive waiting period, can work toward legalizing status. This bill also strengthens enforcement of businesses hiring illegal immigrants.

Only by addressing our border security from a two-pronged, comprehensive approach can we hope to truly accomplish border security. I will continue to work in Congress every day to secure our borders.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

CLASS ACTION FAIRNESS

The Class Action Fairness Act was signed into law February 18. It creates federal – rather than state – jurisdiction over large, multi-state class actions. The bill stops “forum shopping” by plaintiffs’ lawyers and ensures that victims – not attorneys – are primary beneficiaries of the class action process. The Act does not limit the ability of anyone to file a class action lawsuit. It merely allows federal courts to hear big lawsuits involving truly interstate issues, while ensuring that purely local controversies remain in state courts.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM BILL

On April 20, President Bush signed into law the Bankruptcy Abuse and Consumer Protection Act. The Act helps restore the fundamental concept of personal responsibility in the bankruptcy system. It is a well balanced measure that will protect those individuals who need a fresh start while cracking down on abuse of the system, lessening the burden placed on shoulders of American families.

REPEAL OF THE ESTATE TAX

On April 13, the House passed the Estate Tax Bill, which repeals the estate tax permanently from 2010 onward. This is an onerous tax on the transfer of a family business or ranch to someone’s children when they die. It kills small businesses, farms, and ranches by forcing the heirs to sell the business to pay inheritance tax.

ENERGY POLICY ACT

On April 21, the House of Representatives passed a comprehensive energy bill to improve energy conservation, enhance research and technology, and promote production of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and nuclear. The bill strengthens our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign energy sources, promotes a cleaner environment by using renewable energy and alternative power sources, and modernizes electricity infrastructure and protects consumers from unfair prices.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL

On May 5, the House passed the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, an \$82 billion spending package to continue to fund the War on Terror and provide assistance to tsunami stricken areas. Included in this package is \$685 million for 500 new Border Patrol and ICE agents.

HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS

On May 17, the House passed a \$19.4 billion spending package for border protection and law enforcement. This funding allows for 1,000 Border Patrol agents, 350 ICE agents, and 1,920 additional detention beds. The measure also takes a strong stance on Congressional oversight by demanding DHS improve in areas where it has failed to show progress.



BORDER SECURITY PLUS

Encouraging Development South of the Arizona Border

Encouraging development throughout Latin America is essential for the United States to avoid growing political instability and social unrest in our backyard. Latin American democracy is still fragile. Economic malaise has grown into economic crisis in some countries, and the region finds itself in a precarious financial situation. There can be no doubt that Latin America is disillusioned with democracy’s slow pace at producing prosperity.

Illegal immigration to the U.S. rises when political unrest increases in Latin America. If we want to reduce illegal immigration, we must be proactive and help the nations of our hemisphere stimulate development and create economic opportunities at home.

At present, the U.S. is seeking to implement the Central American Free Trade Agreement and is negotiating a

free trade agreement with countries of the Andean region of South America. With each completed agreement, we support prosperity, transparent governance and the rule of law, and economic freedom. These are essential elements to nurture effective political institutions, strengthen civil society, and create broad based economic growth. Our success – or failure – in generating development will impact our national security.

Free trade and development are important to the U.S. and Arizona economies. Through free trade, we eliminate or lower tariffs, which means lower prices for U.S. consumers, families, and businesses that import products. At the same time, the U.S. gains market access for U.S. workers and companies and increases opportunities for exports – thereby increasing incomes and the standard of living for Americans of all walks of life.

From Jim's Mailbag

Dear Representative Kolbe:

As a constituent, I am writing to urge you to support the REAL ID Act sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Sensenbrenner. America's security should be priority number one.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have worked diligently to strengthen our border security and have supported legislation that helps ensure the safety of all Americans from terrorist attacks. I voted for the REAL ID Act (H.R. 418) because it contains a number of provisions related to these crucially important issues proposed by the 9/11 Commission report yet were not included in the final draft of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.

Some of these provisions include:

- Securing our drivers' licenses to ensure only legal U.S. residents can obtain them and requiring identity documents to expire at the same time as the expiration of lawful entry status.
- Allowing for the completion of an important fourteen mile long security fence along the San Diego border.
- Strengthening deportation laws by making aliens currently living in the U.S. who are contributing to terrorist organizations eligible for deportation.

In addition, during consideration of the REAL ID Act on the House floor, I attached an unanimously supported amendment that helps identify and address gaps in border security by increasing new technologies along the northern and southern border. This will foster communication among federal, state and tribal agencies and encourage coordination among law enforcement agencies.

In response to the concern that H.R. 418 creates a national database that threatens the privacy of American citizens, I must stress that REAL ID is not an attempt to establish a National ID. There is no need to build an expensive new bureaucracy when State DMVs are already in place with the infrastructure to securely issue driver's licenses. Under this legislation, States still issue driver's licenses and identification cards, and retain control over their own databases.

I believe REAL ID to be an important step forward in our efforts to secure our borders and bolster our protection against terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

Sincerely,



If you have a question or comment, log onto www.house.gov/kolbe.
Click on the "Contact Jim" link and simply fill out the form with your comments!

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security is one of America's most important government programs, and we should make sure it's there for future generations. Unfortunately, the aging of our population means that the system's finances are in jeopardy. As the graph below shows, Social Security's revenues begin to decline just three years from now. Then the program starts paying out more in benefits than it collects in taxes starting in 2017. If we don't act now, we will have to severely cut benefits for younger workers, raise their payroll taxes, or both. While there isn't yet a crisis in Social Security, there is a major problem – that major problem will become a crisis if Republicans and Democrats don't work together to solve it.

For the past decade, I have worked with my minority colleagues in Congress to make Social Security solvent. The bills have evolved, but the basic principles are the same. First, benefits for anyone age 55 or older do not change. In addition, we accept that Social Security's deficit must be addressed by slowing benefit growth. At the same time, we believe that growth should be slowed in a progressive way that protects low-income workers. The bill also increases the safety net so that everyone who works a full career will be guaranteed a benefit above the poverty level. Finally, the bill includes low-risk personal accounts.

These accounts are important to provide younger workers a higher return on their taxes. This greater return can help make up for the sacrifices that any reform plan will require of today's youth.

This year, I am cosponsoring a Social Security reform bill with Democratic Congressman Allen Boyd of Florida. We are working together to make sure that Social Security is strengthened for future generations. The Bipartisan Retirement Security Act does this at the least cost of any proposal in Congress.

We haven't seen a significant reform to strengthen Social Security since the Reagan administration. Since the changes made at that time did not permanently put the program on a sustainable path, it is imperative to make Social Security a top priority. While there are legitimate differences in opinion on the best way to reform Social Security, we should all be able to agree that inaction is not an option. I will be working hard to ensure that any reform passed by Congress is fiscally responsible and fair for all Americans.

The Cost of Inaction

